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ABSTRACT

Project Success consists of after-school, weekend, and summer educational programs geared toward minority and disadvantaged students to increase their numbers seeking postsecondary education from the Meadville, Pennsylvania area. The project is funded primarily through the Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, whose administration is committed to increasing that student population. In its fifth year of operation, its budget totaled $28,950. The project's numerous components are intended to motivate students to continuously do their best, learn responsibility, develop effective communication skills, and build self-confidence. The Pee Wee Program brings elementary school children together for instruction in arts, crafts, nature, and sports and recreational activities. The Communication Skills Program equips disadvantaged students for effective general communication by teaching students to speak English well, have proper conduct, and develop techniques necessary for securing a job. The Cultural Program includes history lessons, art classes, music classes, and cultural outings. Scholastic Aptitude Test preparation classes offer instruction in math, English, science, and history, and the program helps defray the students' cost of taking the test. (Author/MSE)

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AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory is a two-year project seeking to establish and test a model system for collecting and disseminating information on model programs at AASCU-member institutions--375 of the public four-year colleges and universities in the United States.

The four objectives of the project are:

- To increase the information on model programs available to all institutions through the ERIC system
- To encourage the use of the ERIC system by AASCU institutions
- To improve AASCU's ability to know about, and share information on, activities at member institutions, and
- To test a model for collaboration with ERIC that other national organizations might adopt.

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project is funded with a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, in collaboration with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education at The George Washington University.

ABSTRACT

Project Success is an after-school, weekend and summer educational program geared toward minority and disadvantaged students to increase the number of these students seeking post-secondary education from the Meadville, Pennsylvania, area.

The project is mainly funded through the generous support of Edinboro University President Foster F. Diebold, who has a strong commitment to increasing the numbers of minority and disadvantaged students attending this institution of higher education. The program is entering its fifth year of operation with an overall budget of $28,950.00.

The project is made up of several components targeted to motivate students to strive continuously to do the best they can, learn responsibility, develop effective communication skills and build self-confidence. The components used to meet these general objectives are: Little One's/Pee Wee Class, A Look at You and Me/ Communication I, A Closer Look/Communication II, Typing Skills, SAT preparation and tutoring, music, art and cultural classes, field trips and Project Camp. The program operates out of the Unitarian Church, 346 Chestnut Street, Meadville, Pennsylvania, 16335, Tuesday through Friday from 5 to 7 p.m. It begins the first week in October and concludes the last week in May on a weekly basis as determined by the Crawford Central School calendar.

The Pee Wee Program brings elementary school children together to instruct them in the practical arts. The curriculum, which consists of art, crafts, nature walks, sports and recreational activities, serves both to broaden the child's concept of the environment and to teach respect for natural surroundings.

The Communications Skills Program equips disadvantaged students with the skills to communicate effectively in general, and specifically teaches students to speak English well; emphasizes proper conduct; and develops the techniques necessary for securing a job. The curriculum consists of grammar review, writing skills, proper conduct, public speaking, letter writing and other activities.

The Cultural Program includes history lessons, art classes, music classes and cultural outings. The program develops a sense of appreciation for each cultural experience. The various cultures which make up the community are examined through cultural studies. Art and music appreciation are also offered. Music lessons are offered, as the project has the use of several musical instruments donated for this purpose. Cultural outings expose students to classical productions, museums and other cultural programs.

SAT preparation classes prepare disadvantaged students for success by instructing the students in math, English, science and history. The students are also offered assistance in defraying the cost of the SAT test, and tutorial assistance is provided to those students needing such help.

INTRODUCTION

Project Success is an educational program geared toward meeting the needs of disadvantaged youths in the Meadville, Pennsylvania, area and increasing the number of students seeking post-secondary education. This project, made up of several components, is targeted to motivate students to strive continuously to do the best they can. The components used to meet the general objectives of the project are: Little One's/Pee Wee Classes, A Look at You and Me/Communication I, A Closer Look/Communication II, Typing Skills, SAT preparation and tutoring, music, art and cultural classes, field trips, and Project Camp.

BACKGROUND

Crawford County, according to the 1980 United States Census, has a population of 88,869. Of these, 14,151 individuals live below 125 percent of the federal poverty level. For those employed, black family income averages about $5,000 less than the white family average income of $10,000.

The effects of poverty among families and children, among which blacks are disproportionally represented, are evidenced by high usage of available special service programs. For example, in the County Children and Youth Services Program, 800 children are currently residing with families serviced by the agency.

According to local authorities, 50 percent of all juvenile offenders are from families living below the federal poverty level. County black youth in 1982 represented 13.6 percent of the cases referred to Juvenile Probation. In 1981, 161 Crawford County youths dropped out of school, and a sizeable proportion of these were from low income families.

Educational statistics on Crawford County adults over the age of 25 indicate that disadvantaged groups are less likely to effectively pursue educational goals. Blacks in Crawford County, for example, are 25 percent as likely to complete college as whites and only 65 percent as likely to obtain a four-year high school education. Educational attainment is associated with success in employment as indicated by a Bureau of Employment Security statistic showing that high school drop-outs alone account for 28.4 percent of those unemployed.

The effects of poverty in Crawford County parallel those of other communities. Youth of low income families are not exposed to a wide range of social and cultural activities that aid in the acquisition of skills needed for future success in schools and employment. Having limited resources and often minimal skills, parents of disadvantaged youths are unable to provide the support or encouragement needed for success.

In Crawford County there is a lack of participation by low income youth in social, cultural or leisure time activities that can contribute to this skill development. Failing to participate further contributes to low self-esteem and lack of social skills which further reduces later success in the social and work worlds. The single most important variable in determining

success at work and life adjustment is the acquiring of skills that enable youth to interact, grow and function within formal and informal social groups.

This opportunity is significantly absent for the low income youth in Crawford County. There is no program specifically geared to participation of low income youth in the community activities that will contribute to skills development. Nor is there any program to specifically overcome obstacles and develop individual and family skills to make participation possible and meaningful.

It is very difficult to rank Project Success based on Crawford County Human Services Needs Assessments prepared by the Crawford County Planning Commission. Project Success is designed to help juveniles having problems adjust better to society and, therefore, is part of the youth worker program, which is ranked eleventh. The aspect of Project Success that provides cultural enrichment is linked to the recreation program, which has a seventeenth ranking.

Project Success started as a pilot project in 1984-85 and ran for approximately seven weeks. In the short operation period, the project worked with 72 students. The project has reached its limit due to location and budget. As a result, the project had to turn some students away until space became available, especially in the music area.

DESCRIPTION

Project Success operates from the second floor of the Unitarian Church, 346 Chestnut Street, Meadville, Pennsylvania, 16335. This site is centrally located in the city of Meadville just off the courthouse square. The project operates from the first week in October through the last week in May and generally follows the Crawford Central School District calendar with regard to vacations. It operates Tuesday through Friday from 5 to 7 p.m.

The staff consists of an overall coordinator, seven instructors, University students, community volunteers, a van driver and a secretary-aide. The project provides for transportation on an as-needed basis. The cost of the program, including supplies, incentives, snacks, telephone, building and van rentals, testing fees, salaries and other miscellaneous expenses is $24,453.

The Little One's/Pee Wee class is open to students in grades kindergarten through second grade. Younger students are also considered. The class is designed to develop communicative skills, broaden the child's concept of his/her environment, build self-confidence, teach crafts, teach responsibility, acquaint the child with his/her community, and teach the child to respect our natural surroundings. The class meets twice a week during the program. The curriculum consists of: grammar review, writing skills, proper conduct, public speaking, letter writing, homework assistance, and reading and math comprehension.

Typewriters are available for the Typing program. This portion is used as an effective way of introducing keyboarding skills to the disadvantaged youth who might not otherwise be

afforded such an opportunity. Acquisition of these skills allows them to communicate effectively via the typewriter, computer or word processor. The program assists students in learning the keyboard of the typewriter, developing skill in the manipulation of the keys, building self-confidence and esteem, and enhancing self-concept. This class meets three times a week.

The SAT preparation and tutoring class is open to students in grades 8 through 11. Students in the 11th and 12th grades are also considered. This class focuses on SAT test-taking skills and on math and English. The class attempts to prepare the students in math and English; to instill confidence in the students; to make them aware of the available resources; to assist in defraying the cost of the test; and to improve projected combined scores. The class is offered once a week.

The project has received several musical instruments, including bugles, clarinets, saxophones, trombones and trumpets. The University music department provides student instructors for this program. These student instructors provide hands-on training with a variety of musical instruments and assist students with music appreciation. As a result of this musical instruction and appreciation, it is envisioned that a neighborhood orchestra or band may be formed. Instruction in this area is based on instructor availability.

Art and cultural classes are offered throughout the course of the program. Dance, drama, art and other lessons are offered. This segment is augmented by other sources such as the Meadville Council of the Arts and by guest lecturers.

Remediation courses in reading, math, English, and other subject matter are offered in the summer for the period of two weeks at this same location. The courses provide students with the opportunity to enhance their proficiency in the specific areas. Some practical experiences are afforded these students through the utilization of on-campus University facilities, such as the computer lab and the planetarium.

Project Camp operates during the summer and is a one-week residential camp for selected students between the ages of eight and eleven years who reside in the Erie and Meadville areas. Most of the students are participants of the outreach programs of Edinboro University - Engage and Success.

The purposes of the camp are: (a) to encourage interest in scholastic success and future college enrollment; and (b) to provide these students with an otherwise unattainable camp experience.

The camp includes an educational component with classes in math/computers and reading/library usage, provided by faculty members of Edinboro University's Miller Learning Center. A recreational component is managed by the members of the Student Affairs staff. Students are housed in the University's dormitory and generally live as regular college students with respect to meals and use of campus facilities.

The cost for this portion of Project Success, which is shared with Project Engage, is $3,248. including payment for faculty and student workers, supplies, housing and other miscellaneous expenses.

RESULTS

Records are being kept on each student who participates in the project to evaluate his/her progress. Each activity is evaluated for its value to the program. Evaluation is also done by determining the student's academic standing before and after his/her involvement in the program. Some evaluations are done with regard to those students who actually take the SAT test. Last, evaluation will be done at some point in the future when the regular participants in the program reach the age when post-secondary education becomes an option.

CONCLUSION

The project serves a need in the Meadville area. Students and parents alike anticipate the services the project provides. At one point a strong parent committee was formed and efforts must be made to reinstate this committee.

This program could be replicated easily by other colleges and universities.